

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Assistive Technology (AT) Committee Meeting Minutes
July 17, 2019

Members Present

Bea Shapiro, Chair
Nathan Pullen
Mark Nelson
Terri Hedgpeth
Ed Gervasoni
Sue LeHew

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Karla Rivas-Parker
Kristen Mackey
Brandi Coffland
Gaye Champine

Call to Order and Introductions

Bea Shapiro, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm in the DERS Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of June 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Terri Hedgpeth motioned to approve the June 12, 2019 meeting minutes. Nathan Pullen seconded the motion. Bea Shapiro requested the minutes be corrected to reflect that Terri Hedgpeth discussed the Carroll Center for the Blind book. The amended minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

VRATE Discussion

Bea Shapiro stated that Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) was in November, and the AT Committee needed to decide on the presentation. Bea Shapiro suggested the committee develop a Power Point as part of the presentation and potentially provide some hands-on instruction. Terri Hedgpeth agreed that the committee should develop a

Power Point and potentially some handouts in alternate formats as well. Sue LeHew inquired regarding the information that the committee would present at VRATE. Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee had agreed to co-present with the Employment Committee and discuss worksite evaluation tools. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether the committee would be able to present in the morning. Bea Shapiro stated she had not contacted the VRATE Board, although she would inquire whether the committee could present in the morning. Ms. Shapiro noted her understanding that the AT Committee was currently scheduled to present in the afternoon. She added that the first day of VRATE would be focused on employment and the second day would focus on Independent Living (IL), educators and students. Mark Nelson inquired regarding the hands-on instruction during the presentation. Bea Shapiro stated that committee members could demonstrate some technology during the presentation. Terri Hedgpeth stated the committee members could outline the steps for conducting a worksite evaluation, such as assessing the client's needs and skills, and to communicate those needs to the employer. Bea Shapiro stated the individual would analyze the job description and identify the tools that the employee would require. Mark Nelson suggested the committee members discuss certain equipment and suggest audience members visit those vendors in the Exhibit Hall. Bea Shapiro agreed that the committee members could recommend that audience members visit some of the vendors at the conference. Sue LeHew suggested that Terri Hedgpeth and Mark Nelson include some of their discussions from the Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP) in the AT Committee's presentation at VRATE. Bea Shapiro stated that she would develop a draft outline of the presentation and distribute to the committee members for review.

AT Trends

Mark Nelson stated that the recent Microsoft update affected his ability to use Skype with a screen reader. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether Mark Nelson was using the most recent version of JAWS. Mark Nelson stated he was using JAWS 19. Terri Hedgpeth stated that she used JAWS 18 for some applications in conjunction with Firefox or Chrome. Mark Nelson stated that in the past, he unloaded and reloaded Skype and he was able to use the program, although the most recent version of Skype was not user friendly. Bea Shapiro inquired whether Mark Nelson used Skype to make calls or to access videos. Mark Nelson stated that he only used Skype to make calls.

Sue LeHew stated that at AzTAP, she viewed a new Braille Embosser, that created documents in color or black and white, with better or sharper dots. Sue LeHew stated the company, View Plus, would be at VRATE also. Sue LeHew inquired regarding the Braille device that Mark Nelson had at the

AzTAP Conference. Mark Nelson stated the Q Braille included all the keys in a QWERTY keyboard and put them on the Braille display to allow the individual to access those keys without having to move their hands from keyboard. Bea Shapiro stated the Q Braille allowed an individual to take notes as well.

AT Inventory Discussion

Bea Shapiro stated that at the previous GCBVI Full Council meeting, there were some questions regarding the AT equipment kept in the warehouse for clients. Karla Rivas-Parker, Independent Living Blind (ILB) Manager, stated that ILB had equipment for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients, and for 54 and under clients. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that it was more cost effective to purchase some AT equipment in bulk rather than to order each device. She noted that ILB could also mail equipment to clients directly rather than purchasing from a vendor. Ms. Rivas-Parker stated that the most expensive equipment was stored in a warehouse and the rest of the equipment was stored at the ILB office. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that VR clients requiring low vision equipment would typically obtain the equipment directly from the vendor. She noted that ILB did have equipment related to vision rehabilitation and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) for VR clients. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that clients that were 55 and older could access high-technology, such as CCTV, portable video magnifiers, and software such as JAWS and Zoom Text. Terri Hedgpeth stated that during the GCBVI Full Council meeting, there was mention that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) did not purchase new equipment unless a client required a specific technology. Ms. Hedgpeth stated that she would be interested to know the types of equipment held in the warehouse, and whether the equipment was old. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that ILB did have older equipment such as Braille Note Takers from 2008 and kept the equipment in case an individual did not qualify for other services and could still use the equipment to communicate. Terri Hedgpeth stated her understanding that in the past, RSA purchased AT equipment in bulk to have on hand for clients, although the equipment could become outdated quickly. Ed Gervasoni agreed that it was more cost effective to purchase AT equipment in bulk. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that ILB lost several staff members and contractors and did not have as many individuals serving clients or to teach clients how to use that equipment. Ms. Rivas-Parker noted that in effort to expend the ILB funds, the unit purchased AT equipment, rather than give back federal funds. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that she did not have an O&M teacher and that SAAVI Services for the Blind did not have an O&M instructor in Phoenix either. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether vendors were still required to have a high level of insurance. Karla Rivas-Parker stated the state required vendors to have insurance in order to

provide services to vulnerable individuals. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that she had contacted RSA Contracts regarding whether certain vendors could be exempt from the required insurance. Kristen Mackey stated that due to the recent events involving abuse of vulnerable individuals, that individuals would be required to have insurance. She noted that the Governor and the Legislature had passed legislation regarding those requirements as well, although RSA was exploring alternate methods for providing services to clients.

Bea Shapiro inquired whether the AT equipment would still be under warranty if the equipment was held for a long period of time. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that ILB was able to negotiate with the vendors so that the warranty would begin when the equipment was assigned to a client. Sue LeHew inquired how the software was updated. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that ILB could upgrade software when it was assigned to a client, although ILB would identify whether the newest version would benefit a client and their existing equipment. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether ILB had Duxbury Braille Translation Software for clients. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that ILB had one Duxbury software for VR clients. Terri Hedgpeth stated that Duxbury was quite expensive to upgrade and inquired whether RSA would cover the cost of upgrading Duxbury for clients. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that ILB clients had not been issued Duxbury and noted that a VR counselor would likely approve of the upgraded software if it was needed for employment.

Gaye Champine stated that DTS scanned the AT equipment, and she had a list of the technology name and serial number, although she did not have the date of the equipment. Kristen Mackey stated that the expensive equipment was stored in the warehouse due to a previous burglary, and the higher cost equipment was stolen. Kristen Mackey stated that ILB decided to store the more expensive items in a DES warehouse and to store the less expensive equipment at the local office. Ms. Mackey noted that ILB would focus on providing more direct client services to expend those funds. Kristen Mackey stated that VR grant funds and OIB grant funds were separate funding sources, and RSA had to be diligent about how those hours and funds were spend. Kristen Mackey stated there were no budget associated with clients under 54, therefore, any services provided came from funds not associated with grant funds. Gaye Champine stated that the VR equipment was: Dragon, Zoom Text, JAWS, monitors, barcode readers, docking stations, PAC Mate, Perkins Brailers, Victor readers, and Write Assist. Terri Hedgpeth inquired regarding the non-VR high technology that was stored. Gaye Champine stated that ILB had Amigos, Da Vinci, Dragon Home, Galaxy bar code readers, Merlin Ultra, Merlin Elite, talking microwaves, Perkins Brailers, Ruby 7, Ruby Excel, Trekker Breeze, Smart

Views, Victor Readers, and Zoom Text Fusion. Terri Hedgpeth stated that Trekker Breeze devices were no longer supported, although the devices were useful for individuals using GPS. Sue LeHew inquired whether O&M instructors knew how to use accessible GPS products. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that the previous O&M instructors could practice using the accessible GPS products, although she was unsure whether the current vendors had that experience. Bea Shapiro stated that some equipment would need to be charged periodically so as not to lose the battery when assigned to a client. Karla Rivas-Parker inquired whether the equipment would be affected due to the hot temperatures in the warehouse. Mark Nelson stated that the equipment would likely be unaffected until the temperature reached above 95-100. Terri Hedgpeth stated that the program that served deaf-blind individuals needed equipment such as Braille Note Takers, PAC Mates or refreshable Braille displays. Ed Gervasoni stated the program, I Can Connect, had equipment, although the program was limited regarding the service hours they could provide.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Assistive Technology Committee was scheduled for August 21, 2019 from 3:00-4:30 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows:

- VRATE Discussion
- AT Trends

Announcements

Ed Gervasoni announced that the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) had taken over the I Can Connect program as of July 1, 2019.

Public Comment

A call was made to the public with no comments forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Terri Hedgpeth motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sue LeHew seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 pm.